(a) the reasons for delay in the conversion of Rajkot-Junagarh-Veraval and Gandhidham-Bhuj rail lines into broad gauge;

(b) the earlier target of completion of the said gauge conversion;

(c) whether the said works have been included in the priority list of Railway Network Plan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Constraint of resources.

(b) 31.12.1999.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Upgradation of Posts

1539. SHRI K.M. KHAN: will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Group-B Gazetted posts in the Ministry have been upgraded as Group-A Gazetted posts in recent past;

(b) whether incumbents of such upgraded posts would continue to shoulder the same responsibilities which they were handling in Group-B posts;

(c) whether such situation is a humiliation to Group-B Gazetted officials when the incumbents of upgraded posts would continue to work in one room, doing the work of Group-B Gazetted;

(d) whether Government propose to transfer the incumbents of upgraded posts to some other directorates, in view of posts (b) and (c); and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (e) In order to remove the acute stagnation, to some extent in Central Secretariat Service, Department of Personnel & Training as per their Office Memorandum No. 21/48/97-CS.I dated 28.09.98, upgraded 225 posts of Desk Officers/Section Officers of Central Secretariat Service to the grade of Under Secretaries and 72 posts of Under Secretaries to the grade of Deputy Secretaries on personal basis, with, inter-alia the following conditions:—

(i) The appointments against the upgraded posts will not entitle the officers to any claim for regular appointment as Under Secretary/ Deputy Secretary or seniority in the grade.

(ii) The upgraded posts will automatically revert to their original level as and when the incumbents of such posts vacate them on their promotion against actual vacancies in the higher grade or on their retirement, resignation etc.

(iii) The officers adjusted against the upgraded posts will be given the designation and scale of pay of the posts but will continue to perform the same duties/functions as they are doing at present, till they get adjusted against regular vacancies in the higher grade. Some internal arrangement in regard to the level/system of submission of papers by the incumbents of the upgraded posts may be necessary, which may be made by the concerned Ministries/Departments internally.

(iv) The special pay to which the Desk officers are entitled will not be admissible on their upgradation

on 'personal/ad-hoc' basis against the upgraded posts. If any of the officers happens to be on leave, deputation etc. he will be given the benefit of personal upgradation from the date he assumes duty in the cadre post.

(2) The Railway Board Secretariat Service Group 'B' Officers Association, enclosing a copy of this Office Memorandum dated 28.09.98 of Department of Personnel & Training, represented for similar upgradation from the grade of Section Officers/Desk Officers in Railway Board to the grade of Under Secretary/Deputy Director.

(3) The Railway Board Secretariat Service is patterned on the lines of Central Secretariat Service. The representation of the Railway Board Secretariat Service Group 'B' Officers' Association, was therefore considered in the light of personal upgradations effected in Central Secretariat Service and keeping in view the existing and forthcoming stagnation due to enhancement of retirement age from 58 years to 60 years etc.

(4) After due consideration, the competent authority have since approved for upgradation of 40 posts of Section Officers/Desk Officers of Railway Board to the grade of Under Secretaries/Deputy Directors, on personal basis, on the lines of the similar upgradations effected in Central Secretariat Service. However, no formal order, in this regard have yet been issued.

(5) The incumbents of the upgraded posts Section Officers/Desk Officers to the grade of Under Secretaries/Deputy Directors will continue to perform the same functions as they are doing at present and shall, therefore, continue to sit in their present accommodation. There is no humiliation involved in this as the proposal accords them a higher grade of pay as also higher status.

Basic amenities at Railway Stations

1540. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the means to ensure that all basic amenities are provided at every station, especially in remote areas;

(b) the number of surprise checking of passenger amenities provided at a station, especially in South Central and South Eastern Railways, made during the last one year; and

(c) the result of the checks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Yearly data of passenger amenities available at all stations is collected by the Railways and any deficiency found is rectified. In addition some special surveys are also undertaken. The last such survey was conducted during January, 1998 and all Zonal Railways including South Central and South Eastern Railways have confirmed availability of basic amenities at all stations.

Surprise checks are conducted by the railway officials from time to time in which one of the aspect checked is the passenger amenities. During the last one year, 1550 such surprise checks by South Central and 742 by South Eastern Railways were conducted. Minor deficiencies noticed during these checks were got rectified on the spot.

Rail over-bridge at Jajpur-Keonjhar road

1541. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state: